

The
OPEN COURT

Devoted to the Science of Religion,
the Religion of Science, and the Extension
of the Religious Parliament Idea

FOUNDED BY EDWARD C. HEGELER

NOVEMBER, 1931

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VOLUME XLV NUMBER 906

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THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

EDITED BY

FRANK THILLY

and G. WATTS CUNNINGHAM

OF THE SAGE SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

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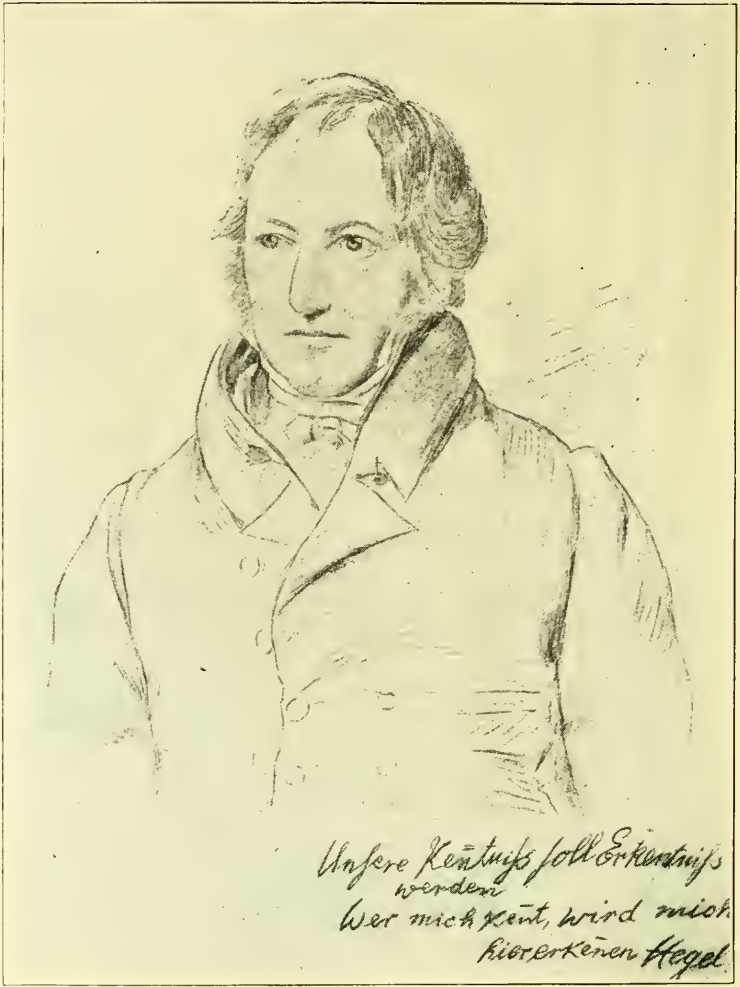
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Number 906

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HEGEL¹

BY EDWARD L. SCHAUB

THE disturbing events and tragedies of recent history have forced upon the attention of all thoughtful men the nature of the social order in which we are living. They have led to a deeply serious investigation into the fundamental principles and into the real significance and value of our present civilization. This has widened the interest in philosophy. For, some truth there surely is in Hegel's remark that a philosophy is the mode in which an epoch exhibits a reflective self-consciousness of its diversified and yet basically related expressions. Philosophy, moreover, is receiving impetus from the fact that individuals are being turned by the forces of circumstance into the search for a satisfactory *Lebensanschauung*. Scientists, on their part, are pressing beyond their restricted fields to determine the wider bearings of their theories and to discover a synthesis in which ascertained truths may dwell together in a meaningful coherence. It is keenly realized that the richly adorned temple of the sciences—to employ a figure of Hegel's

¹This paper was prepared in response to the desire of the Editor to take some cognizance of the centenary of the death of one of mankind's master minds.

George William Frederick Hegel died in Berlin, on November 14, 1831, while at the height of his academic influence and of his philosophic powers. He was then sixty-one years of age, having been born on August 27, 1770. His native city was Stuttgart, and the influence of this Swabian environment, as well as of the upper middle class family to which he belonged, manifested themselves in his attitudes and thought throughout his entire career.

From the elementary schools and the gymnasium of Stuttgart, Hegel went, in 1788, to the university in Tübingen. Here he was matriculated as a student of theology. He gave large play, however, to an early acquired interest in Greek literature and art, and he turned his attention also to current revolutionary movements and to contemporary writers, particularly Rousseau, as well as to Kant's teachings concerning the moral autonomy of the rational individual. He devoted much thought likewise to the relation of

—must again be given its holy of holies, that is, a metaphysics. Thus we are witnessing an active quest for a philosophy that issues from the findings of science and that likewise reckons justly with the facts of concrete social and historical experience. Such being the case, is it at all strange that there is a revival of interest in that particular philosophy which still stands as man's most imposing attempt to bring together into a meaningful whole—or, more accurately, to set forth methodically the intrinsic relationships that subsist between—the categories of logical thought, the general concepts of scientific knowledge, the basal characteristics of individual minds, and the forms and developmental stages of political and social institutions, of art, of religion, and of those systems of reflective interpretation known as philosophy?

Whatever may be the explanation—whether the conditions of contemporary life (such as those suggested), or the immanent logic of cultural history in general or of philosophical development in particular²—the plain fact is that the philosophy of Hegel is today enjoying a renaissance, even where, as in the country of its birth, it had for decades commonly been deemed to belong at best in a museum of speculative constructions.³

Kant's ethical doctrines, and of philosophy in general, to theology. All of this, however, was outside the scope of his academic work in course. The certificate which he received upon leaving the university—it is interesting to note—made special reference to his inadequate knowledge of philosophy.

During seven years of tutorship in Bern and Frankfurt, Hegel centered his personal study about the origins of Christianity and its connections with the Greek and Jewish religions. He wrote a life of Jesus and committed to paper his thoughts on the relations of Kant's ethical philosophy to the religion of Jesus. His mind wrestled, among other things, with the problem of the freedom of the individual in its apparent conflict with institutional and social authority. He clearly recognized that the principle of freedom expounded by Kant and Fichte and, in a somewhat different form, expressed by the revolutionary spirit of the age, had very genuine and high claims; yet these, he was forced to believe, must not be allowed to dim the prestige possessed by the social order in Greek life and thought. The issue was a particular form of one which, in some context or another, remained important throughout all of Hegel's thought and writing. The whole and its parts or members, the universal and the particular, unity and diversity, identity and difference—in all of these cases, both terms, Hegel contended, must be vigorously pressed, each in its intrinsic relations to the other, if either is to preserve itself and to possess meaning.

In 1801 Hegel was appointed to a Privat-Dozentship, and in 1805 to a professorship, in Jena. Here he at first collaborated sympathetically with Schelling, a friend of Tübingen days. Soon, however, he reached independent views, critical alike of Schelling and of Fichte, whose stormy Jena career had terminated in 1799: Critical of Schelling because of the latter's increasing tendencies toward mysticism and his interpretation of the ultimate principle of unity as transcendent of differences—a view, Hegel pointed out, which

Few events in the history of philosophical systems are more striking than the vicissitudes of the Hegelian system, particularly within the land where it was first proclaimed. The sun in the intellectual firmament of Hegel's own day, it passed abruptly, shortly after his death, into almost total eclipse (within the orbit of German vision), only within little more than the decade just past to break forth anew and now to shine with a splendor all but dazzling. German thinkers have of late been moving from the most diverse starting-points in the direction of Hegelian doctrines; Hegel's works are again the subject of intensive study;⁴ a new and attemptedly definitive edition of Hegel's works is under way; and the Second International Hegelian Congress, arranged to commemorate the centenary of Hegel's death, was this past month held in Berlin, and the majority of those on its program were Hegelians from Germany.⁵

In Italy and France the Hegelian doctrines have had a less checkered career. They have seldom failed of able expounders or even champions. In English-speaking countries, they have exercised a leading influence ever since the time of their importation, affords us not the light of day but leaves us in the darkness of the "night in which all cows are black"; and critical of Fichte because of his excessively abstract conception of the Absolute Ego and his doctrine that the "ought" is a more basic category than "being," that the "ought-to-be" preconditions the "is."

Hegel's first great philosophic work, the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, appeared in 1807. The contents of this book are described by Edward Caird (*Hegel*, p. 62) as "a kind of genetic psychology or philosophical 'Pilgrim's Progress,' in which the individual, beginning with the lowest sensuous consciousness which is possible to a rational being, is gradually led upwards, by the dialectic of his own thought to the highest speculative idea of the world as an organic system, whose principle of unity lies in the self-conscious intelligence." The work, however, is so complex, as well as so unique, that it might with equal or perhaps even greater truth be said to set forth in dialectical form the perennial types of human experience. In the words of Loewenberg (*Hegel's Selections*, Introduction, pp. xviii f.): "Different and recurrent views of life—sensuous and intellectual, emotional and reflective, practical and theoretical, mystic and philistine, sceptical and dogmatic, empirical and speculative, conservative and radical, selfish and social, religious and secular—are induced to voice the will to believe in their own exclusive reasonableness. And reasonable each does appear from the point of view of its own perspective....(Yet each) finds its claim to power rebuked and impugned....The truth is that every particular point of view ineluctably suffers from a warped perspective....The dialectical method (lays) siege to every typical attitude or belief by rendering its partisan claims logically ridiculous."

The battle of Jena caused a break of ten years duration in Hegel's academic career. During this interval he served as editor of a newspaper in Bamberg (1806-8) and as director of the gymnasium in Nüremberg (1808-16); and, what is of vastly greater significance, he brought out his comprehensive

and today they have been brought into an even more strategic position through the publication of English translations of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (by J. B. Baillie, in 1910) and of the *Wissenschaft der Logik* (by W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers, in 1929), as well as of an independent translation of a part of the latter work, and through the admirable compilation of selections with which Prof. Loewenberg has enriched the Philosophy Series of the Modern Students' Library.

What modifications in the interpretation of Hegel may issue from the fresh study of today, especially in the light of recent translations, may not confidently be predicted. For we realize that after Dilthey, in 1905, published *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels*, and others at about the same time studied the early chapters of Hegel's life, many believed themselves in possession of a new key with which to unlock the Hegelian philosophy as a whole. Hegel, they contended, was not a rationalist and panlogist, but was essentially a romantic and, indeed, a mystic in a very real sense of this term. His dialectical method, they declared, was not the product of speculative thought, nor should it be regarded as setting forth the movement

Wissenschaft der Logik, the one work, as Caird maintains, "which the modern world has to put beside the 'Metaphysic' of Aristotle" (*l.c.*, p. 75). Hegel's *Logik* exhibits the immanent dialectical necessity with which the categories progress from the most abstract of them all, namely "being," to the Absolute Idea, the self-comprehending Notion," the principle of rational self-consciousness.

While professor of philosophy in Heidelberg (1816-18) Hegel published the *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*. This treatise offers us the only statement which Hegel has given us of his philosophical system as a whole. Unfortunately the material is offered, as the title page of the book indicates, only "in Outline"; it takes the form of compact paragraphs which represent epitomizations or expressions of doctrine which Hegel developed orally in his university lectures.

From Heidelberg Hegel migrated to the university in Berlin. This institution he served for thirteen years as a professor, and, during 1830, as rector. In 1821 there appeared the *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, which was thus the fourth, as it proved to be the last, of the books published by Hegel himself. The subject matter is set forth in the manner characteristic of the writer. Concepts are shown to lead of inner, dialectical necessity to other concepts by which they are at once annulled and preserved; they are shown to be partial truths, which, therefore, are not *the* truth while yet they convey *a* truth, the nature and range of which are disclosed by the successively more inclusive concepts. These more inclusive concepts, principles or institutions, as the case may be, are the presupposition of the more abstract and therefore less self-sustaining ones; they are the rational matrix of the latter, the medium within which alone these have their life and meaning. In the case of the *Philosophie des Rechts* the development is from "right," as abstract, universal and external, to its antithesis "morality," which is internal and individual, and then to the synthesis described as the ethical

of reason. It was, on the contrary, an instrument of emotional interpretation. Hegel's logic, in brief, is a logic of passion, of the hard wrestling of Hegel's own tragic spirit in its attempt to reconcile practical antinomies of experience, such as those of unhappiness and happiness, defeat and victory, profound sorrow and exultant joy, death and the resurrection. Thus taken, it was alleged, Hegel's system as a whole becomes, if not transparent, at least clearer and more significant. With its penetrating flashes of imagination, its terms freighted with a wealth of meaning and allusion, its intricately developed themes, dramatic transitions, and brilliant denouements, Hegel's philosophy, it was said, is the utterance of a soaring spirit who voiced, with passionate earnestness and philosophic artistry, his concrete reactions to the issues of human life and to the cosmos in which these have their setting. Increasing preoccupation with the *Phenomenology*, it seems clear, is likely to fortify this interpretation of the Hegelian writings. On the other hand, intensified study of the later works, such as that of the newly translated *Science of Logic*, will throw into prominence Hegel's insistent demands that emotion and imagination be

order and represented by the institutions of the family, the civic community, and, finally, the state. Thus Hegel concluded that the national state is the source and medium of abstract right and morality, and the order within which the family and the economic and civic life reach their full possibilities; that the national state is the culminating expression of the Absolute in the realm of objectively manifested spirit, though, to be sure, each particular manifestation of it has its place within the process of world history. For this doctrine, with its associated defence of war, Hegel has often been subjected to the most severe of criticisms. Whatever may be said, however, respecting the cogency of his argument, this should not be regarded as a bid for the favor of the political powers dominating Prussia at the time. It was rather an honest expression of a mind which in all domains of reality sought the essential reasonableness of things, which had early been impressed by Greek civilization and political philosophy, and had been a personal witness of the consequences of the revolutionary doctrines of abstract individualism. Hegel was convinced of the necessity of social stability as it is guaranteed by a comprehensive institution—an institution, however, not so much vested with power as living in the unreserved loyalties of its members.

During his Berlin professorship Hegel's intellectual influence and prestige increased very rapidly. Not even the efforts of a Schopenhauer could dislodge him from his position of dominance. He founded a philosophical school which, with all its changing fortunes, has proved to be as influential as any in modern history, and which still possesses a vitality sufficient to destroy, through assimilation, many a movement that may rise up against it.

Hegel's lectures on the history of philosophy and on the philosophy of history, of art, and of religion, were published posthumously from student notes, and they now form part of the edition of Hegel's works brought out in 1832-5 in the form of eighteen volumes, later supplemented by a volume of letters edited by Hegel's son, Karl.

kept in proper bounds by the critical reason, that reflective thought be given its rightful sovereignty, and that insight and knowledge be claimed only where conclusions are rationally comprehended, that is, are understood not alone in terms of the principles and processes employed in reaching them, but also in the light of their underlying assumptions when these are themselves grasped and definitely justified.

In his introductory preface to the *Science of Logic* Viscount Haldane ventures the assertion that "no student of philosophy can be sure of the ground he is treading unless he has made the effort required to follow out what Hegel claims to tell him." Hegel's philosophy an indispensable object of study for all who would philosophize seriously even today! What thing greater, one might well ask, could be claimed for any system of thought? Yet one claim there is which, if not greater, is at least more sweeping, and it is this which Hegel did not hesitate himself to advance for the philosophy which he developed. The latter, he insisted, is the absolute philosophy. It sets forth the final truth; moreover, it does so in such wise as cogently to exhibit the fact that what it presents is in fact the truth. Hence it merits not merely the study but also the acceptance of all who would possess a valid comprehension of reality.

This claim, extravagant or even preposterous as to some it may appear, was not the expression of a frenzied, a Nietzschean, or

²This subject is penetratingly analyzed by Dr. Heinrich Levy in his monograph *Die Hegel-Renaissance in der deutschen Philosophie*, pp. 5ff. For an illuminating account of the conditions that have led to a renewed interest in metaphysics, more especially on the part of German philosophers, reference may be made to the essay on "Contemporary Metaphysics" which Professor Arthur Liebert contributed to the present writer's volume, *Philosophy Today* (Open Court Publishing Co., 1928).

³During a visit which the writer was privileged to have in Berlin with the late Alois Riehl, this distinguished scholar—but twenty years ago—inquired how it could be that the Hegelian philosophy, so long discarded in Germany as essentially misdirected and false, should continue to receive such high and wide-spread recognition among British and American thinkers.

⁴As one item in the rapidly growing bibliography, particular reference may be made to Th. L. Haering's *Hegel: Sein Wollen und sein Werk*. Of this work only the first volume (1929) has as yet appeared. This is a tome of 785 pages, though the period covered is only that prior to 1802, prior, therefore to the time when Hegel's system first took form.

⁵For a glance at the rich and varied program of this Congress, see *The Monist*, XLI, 4, (October, 1931), p. 636.

a bigoted mood. Hegel could logically put forth no other. For the claim followed from his conception of reality and from his doctrine concerning the nature and office of philosophy. And these views, he believed himself to have shown, have their foundation in the immanent and logically necessary development, throughout the centuries, of self-critical, reflective thought concerning the world and man's place therein, and concerning the principles and stand-points involved in such reflection.

Let us develop this point a bit further. Hegel's comprehensive system explored, first, the field of logical categories and, secondly, the domain of physical nature; then it passed on to the realm in which nature comes to a consciousness of itself in man, and in which the meanings and self-conscious purposes of the individual mind are objectified (and thus in course expanded and rationalized) into and through social institutions and art, which are superseded by the direct realization, in religious experience, of man's identity with the ultimate reality, which is absolute spirit, and finally by the effort at a rational comprehension (called philosophy) of the truth vouchsafed by the religious experience but embodied by the latter in imaginative forms. This philosophic comprehension, as self-conscious rationality, reaches its goal when it understands itself as grasping the truth and also as integrally related to the real order which it knows; when it possesses a knowledge of its own genesis and of its development into the clear consciousness of itself, of the validity of its findings, and of the identity of itself with the real world. Thus, for Hegel, reality attains to its culminating expression when, in the capacity of self-conscious beings, it comes to a rational comprehension of itself, and this it does in philosophy; and, furthermore, the culmination of philosophy is that philosophical knowledge of philosophy in which the nature and the truth of the latter are methodically and rationally set forth, and in which philosophy has therefore reached its goal. The philosophy in which the logical development of philosophy thus issues is final. Its finality is guaranteed by the fact that the principles underlying other philosophies give way, under active reflection and by an immanent rational necessity, to successively ampler and truer principles until they eventually find in it their logically required completion. Of this ultimate philosophy two things may be said: it explicitly recognizes and gives due place to the partial truth of the

various subordinate systems of thought; and it satisfies the requirements of the reason which functions as the mainspring of the succession within which they appear.

Hegel penetrated to the underlying principles of philosophical systems, and with his marvellous combination of analytic power, synoptic comprehension, and speculative gifts, set forth at once the full range of their truth and likewise the limits of their significant functioning. Because of this fact he is indeed, as Viscount Haldane affirms, a most valuable guide for all who would properly assess the nature and validity of their philosophical views. But Hegel himself, as we have noted, believed himself to have shown conclusively that the dialectic of philosophic thought leads inevitably to, and finds logical completion in, one particular system. This system he therefore felt under compulsion to accept. Hence he could make no claim for his philosophy short of absoluteness and finality. Because this philosophy is a philosophy, and because it is that particular philosophy which is absolute, Hegel was forced by his doctrines to declare that it embodied the final truth of reality.

Reality, as the foregoing will already have suggested, is for Hegel definable in terms of that which fully satisfies the requirements of reason. Reason, in turn, occupies a place of centrality. It cannot, in his view, be either an accident or a stranger within the cosmos. Nor can it be what recent proponents of emergent evolution represent it: a characteristic of a particular level of reality or some stage belonging to the series of novelties generated in the unpredictable processes of an emergent evolution. Still again, it cannot be what pragmatists and instrumentalists allege: simply a feature or part of the equipment which, in the first instance, contributes to the survival of certain organic beings by facilitating their adjustments to environmental conditions, and, in due course, enhances the values of life by increasing the control over circumstances. Reason, for Hegel, yields a knowledge which is other and higher than that sought by certain of the modern sciences in their concern for relations of cause and effect and for abstract laws; it yields results which transcend the knowledge described by Francis Bacon in terms of power. Reason, in the Hegelian doctrine, is not a mere servant of life. Quite the contrary. It is autonomous as respects its ends, free as respects its activities, and supreme as re-

spects its value. Reason is the manifestation in finite spirits of that universal or absolute spirit whose expressions include all that exists and whose being includes within itself all its expressions. Reason, therefore, is the principle whereby man comes to find himself at home in the universe and attains to the insight that this experience of at-homeness is justifiable; it is a function of knowing and not of behavior, of cognition and not of action; it is central to, indeed is constitutive of, finite spirits, and is not merely a part of their endowment. It is identical with the reason which underlies all that of which true being may be affirmed. What is real is rational, and what is rational is real.

That reason may afford truth, and that reason satisfied represents truth attained, are the necessary assumptions on the part of all philosophies that would escape the self-contradictory position of the absolute sceptic who declares it to be true that we may never characterize any proposition as true. Even those "critical" thinkers who set out by investigating the powers of mind or of reason to yield truth, or by seeking to determine the limits of rational knowledge, must employ cognitive processes in their critiques, and so, like Kant, must—if they would affirm the conclusions to which they come—tacitly assume the validity of reason. To Hegel this seemed so indisputable that he saw no point in any investigation by pure reason of itself, of its nature and powers. The latter, he contended, are manifest in the achievements of reason when employed in its own characteristic function of rendering intelligible the real world. Philosophy, therefore, like pre-philosophical cognition, should begin by directing its attention to material that requires interpretation, and should thenceforth devote itself to the task of comprehending the nature of that which is to be known. To be sure, reason may concern itself with an examination of achieved knowledge in order to ascertain the categories and general concepts which the latter involves. This, however, does not reveal the structure of a mind in the sense of something that exists independently of, and, as it were, prior to experience or the world which it knows. Rather does it afford insight into the structure of knowledge and of the real world. Categories are not a priori forms of an understanding or a reason in the sense, for example, of Kant; they are not imposed by the mind upon objects in such wise that the outcome is merely

a mental product, and therefore a knowledge simply of phenomena as distinguished from an order of things-in-themselves which remains unknown and is unknowable. Categories, Hegel contends, represent the structure of the world as rationally comprehended, and thus of the intelligible, and, therefore, of the real world. The categories have an ontological, and not simply an epistemological—much less a merely psychological—status.

Reason, thus, of necessity begins its tasks with a simple faith in its own validity. In the course of its operations, however, this faith is increasingly justified, until, at the conclusion of philosophical thinking—so Hegel teaches—it shines forth as demonstrably valid. The philosophy of philosophy, Hegel believed himself to have established, discloses the truth that the reason employed in knowing the world is in principle identical with the reason whose objectified expressions are the worlds of nature and of social and historical life. The beginning thus leads to a conclusion which represents the presupposition of the process as a whole: the end is its own beginning. Thus we have a circle, and this, according to Hegel, is testimony of the adequacy of the point of view and the procedure adopted. Such a circle, for example, appears also when one considers the system of the categories. Of these, the most simple, the most abstract and yet most immediately inescapable, is that of pure being. From pure being, as the first of the categories, thought is carried on to ever more inclusive and concrete categories, until it reaches one in which it attains to complete satisfaction. This it does in the category of absolute idea, described by Hegel's as that which "contemplates its content as its own self. . . . (and thus) is its own content, in so far as it ideally distinguishes itself from itself." This identity of thought and object, of subject and object, is the presupposition of being, and, furthermore, it alone makes intelligible the movement of thought from this category to the one which is self-maintaining. The end is at once the fulfillment, the presupposition and the justification of the beginning, and in so far also of itself. It, and the entire system, are therefore self-justifying; they are final and absolute; reason's faith in itself and claims for itself are firmly grounded; the real is rational and the philosophy which brings this to explicit and methodical exhibition is the ultimate philosophy.

The philosopher's concern is not with that which may be or will be—with what may or will happen to him after death, for example—but with that which *is*. He should not aspire to prophecy but to wisdom. Wisdom, however, is something that comes when experiences have run their course and serene reflection ponders their teachings. It is not until the shadows of evening have fallen, as Hegel reminds us, that the owl of Minerva takes its flight. So, too, the essential function of philosophy is not the condemnation or the criticism of the real order under the drive of what individuals or generations suppose ought to be. Philosophy should rather labor for a rational comprehension of what eternally is real, and, because real, is also the ultimate eirenicon for our standards of value. To put the matter theologically, man should not assert his ideas and his preferences over against the rational will of God, but should aspire to know the divine mind and should unwaveringly and in all piety accept the latter as the norm of goodness and beauty as well as of truth. It is therefore a degradation and a profanation of philosophy to subsume it under the instruments of social reform. The course of history is the march of the absolute spirit in the world; it no less than nature is rational and divine. *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*. To understand that this is the case, and to capture the order of ideas systematically exhibited by history and nature, is the basic task of philosophy and the highest activity of man. Property, contract, family, and state, for example, are not institutions that have arisen accidentally or that owe their being to the inventiveness of individual men. Nor is their justification and meaning to be found in the fact that they satisfy subjective needs or desires. They express the nature of reality. Their existence and their essential nature are not fortuitous but are necessary—not, however, in the sense of being causally determined by empirical conditions but of belonging to the requirements of reason. Some truth there doubtless is in the charges that Hegel was unduly conservative in his social and political theories, that he “deified” the state (indeed, the Prussian state), and that he was lamentably insensitive to the injustices and other evils of existing institutions in general. On the other hand, it should be acknowledged that few, if any, thinkers have more profoundly disclosed the essential nature and spiritual contributions of the basic insti-

tutions of modern civilization. And it was at such insight that Hegel aimed rather than at information concerning how far the institutions of his own particular day, in the details of their structure and functioning, were factually true to their essential nature and rational purpose. In his social philosophy, as throughout, Hegel concerned himself, not with a description or an analysis of what factually is but with the exhibition, in methodical form, of rational requirements and thus of the necessary.

Hegel has at times been accused of bending his energies to the spinning of imaginative cobwebs. It has been charged that he was scornful of science and that, in detachment from facts, he unabashedly forced his mind to a priori speculations of the extremest and emptiest sort. Scarcely anything could be further from the truth. He contended, to be sure, that the point of view, the categories, and the conclusions of the particular sciences were not the highest, that they belonged to the level of *Verstand*, of the "understanding," and not of *Vernunft*, of "reason." In so doing, however, he differed from many of the greatest of thinkers, both earlier and later, only in the subtlety and thoroughness of his analysis. He himself was well versed in the scientific knowledge of his generation and contributed not a little to it, especially as concerns the things of the spirit. When the story is finally written of the genesis and development of the historical method in the social disciplines and in the interpretation of philosophy, a large chapter will revolve about his work and teaching. His mind, furthermore, was of a deeply realistic cast. He repudiated everything that savored of the subjective. He attacked all theories of a "pure" reason, of mind as a spiritual substance or activity separable from the content of the world known, of a priori "forms" or powers yielding knowledge in independence of experience. It was his contention that spirit and reason represent the real *qua* intelligible, and in his own procedure he ever remained faithful to this thesis. Human thought, he maintained, must surrender itself to subject matter and must throughout loyally accept its governance. Things must be allowed to reveal their own character; comprehension is always from within. Reason must follow *der Gang der Sache selbst*. Even "independent," free lance, critiques of concepts and theories must be eschewed. These must be permitted, yea forced, to tell their own story; only when given full play will their limitations,

as well as their value, be disclosed in a genuinely significant way.

Thus Hegel disallows every divorce between mind and its objects. No less emphatically does he decry all attempts to isolate method from content. Things reveal their nature in their own way. This way is essential to them and thus enters into our knowledge of them. All-pervasive is their dialectical character. To comprehend matters dialectically, therefore, is to grasp them in their truth and is not an eccentric method of forcing them into an arbitrary framework. The dialectical method is not one among others between which philosophers may choose. It is the one valid and rationally required method for all thought which, like philosophy, would be faithful to that to which it addresses itself. The fact is that "the truth is the whole." Hence every category and general concept, every theory and phenomenon, every institution and manifestation of spirit, being instinct with the life of the whole asserts itself to the utmost; but, in so doing it betrays the fact that it is not the whole and thus falls short of the truth. It impinges upon that which limits it and in this wise it exposes its own limitation. Since, however, that which limits it is *its* limitation, the limiting factor is in so far inherent within itself. To put the matter otherwise, it represents a thesis which involves an antithesis; this antithesis, although genuinely such and therefore distinguishable from the thesis, is nevertheless the latter's own antithesis, required by its very nature, and therefore intrinsically related to it. This means that both thesis and antithesis are integral to a synthesis within which they have determinate meanings and positions. The synthesis, however, in turn reveals its own limitations. Thus it acquires the status of a thesis with an antithesis of its own, and this necessitates a fresh synthesis. This condition of affairs prevails until there finally emerges an all-inclusive synthesis which, as the rational whole, is self-sustaining; which, as infinite, confronts no extraneous limitation or antithesis; and which, as absolute, includes within itself the entire system of distinctions in the form of subordinate syntheses with their thetic and antithetic constituents.

Some there are who extol the Hegelian method but thrust aside what they describe as the body of Hegelian doctrine; others accept the latter but find no value in the method. Neither of these groups would Hegel consider as his disciples. Both depart from an insistence which to him was fundamental, namely that method

and results are bound up together, that the constituents of reality are dialectical in their own essential nature, that form and content, mind and its objects, are inseparable.

Thus the dialectical method which Hegel advocated as prerequisite to the acquisition and the formulation of the truth seemed to him an important discovery, rather than an invention in the strict sense of the term, on the part of philosophy. For this discovery he gave the credit to others. The method had been used, as he pointed out, by Socrates and Plato, and, in modern times, by Kant and some of those who had learned from him. It is only fitting to acknowledge, however, that no previous thinker gave to it either the scope or the importance which it received at the hands of Hegel, nor had anyone else employed it so skillfully. On the other hand, interpreters are to this day disagreed as to whether the method, as found in the Hegelian philosophy, relates essentially to concepts and realities, as was above maintained, or simply to attitudes and views respecting the world, or to both: whether it remained and was intended to remain identical throughout the several fields of its employment, such as logic, philosophy of nature, philosophy of mind, and the transitions between them; whether, as Croce contends,⁶ its use betrays a confusion between the relations of abstract aspects of a conception, on the one hand, and, on the other, of opposities or distinct manifestations of principles; whether its setting is the non-temporal realm of essences or the world of temporal and historical occurrences, or both: whether, in case, and when, it is utilized for historical interpretation, culture is regarded as continuous and cumulative or as a succession of phenomena different both in form and content and without historic continuity; and, whether, in spite of its stress upon development and movement, and its rejection of formal and of "static" logic,⁷ it was itself, as Liebert maintains,⁸ in the last analysis still so infected with staticism that it must give way to a newer and more vital dialectic—a dialectic truer to the problematical character of historical and

⁶In his important book translated into English under the title *What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*.

⁷Formal logic was criticized by Hegel on the ground that its laws of thought are tautologous and its propositions analytical, for which reason it fails to yield significant knowledge. It belongs essentially at the level of mechanistic interpretation; it cannot express the truth of things precisely because it is indifferent to content. To be true, thought must pulsate with the life of its objects.

⁸In his above-mentioned essay on "Contemporary Metaphysics."

psychological life, in which (to quote Liebert)—“rational elements are combined with others that are thoroughly irrational, intuitive, and neither reducible to nor expressible in conceptual terms,” the combination being “fundamentally antinomical and paradoxical.”

Similarly divergent also are the findings of scholars with respect to the details of Hegel's imposing system of speculative or absolute idealism. Upon these differences we may not here enter without making a still heavier overdraft upon the space at our disposal. Suffice it here to stress some general and fundamental features that demarcate and characterize Hegel's philosophy. Over against the Spinozistic teaching that determination is negation, it ranges the doctrine that negation is determination, that significant denial implies and issues in affirmation. Reality is determinate. It is a unity that is realized in multiplicity; it represents an identity that mediates itself through and in differences which it at once distinguishes from itself and yet sustains. The infinite or absolute is self-determining and self-developing. Hence it is not substance but spirit. As spirit it is characterized by life, and the knowledge of it therefore involves a rational comprehension of all its developmental stages and processional expressions. Such comprehension is possible. For the absolute spirit—to borrow Hegel's way of putting it—is not envious but discloses itself to the knowing mind of man⁹; it does not remain hidden but wills to be known and does reveal its inmost nature to human reason. Reality, to be sure, is not, and will never be, known in the fullness of its detail; yet in principle it is knowable. Metaphysical agnosticism may seem modest yet it is false. The declaration that reality is unknowable can be based only on some knowledge of reality. To know a limit is already to have transcended it. Similarly, oppositions and antitheses, in so far as they appear as such to thought, are *ipso facto* already in principle overcome and require only an explicit integration into syntheses. The Kantian doctrine of things-in-themselves therefore succumbs to attacks from this line of approach as well as from a true apprehension of the nature and status of the categories.

⁹“To say that we cannot penetrate into the essence of nature, to say that we cannot grasp the nature of God, is to believe that he is envious. God communicates and reveals what he is” (*Werke*, VI, pp. 277 f.) Also: “The inscription on the veil of Isis vanishes before thought” (*Ibid.*, VII, p. 16).

The debate over the validity of Hegel's general point of view and central teachings is not likely soon to terminate. But even among the doubters and deniers there are many who find in Hegel's detailed treatments of philosophical principles and systems, of politics, of art, and of religion many insights and interpretations which impress them as penetrating and fruitful. Hegel's style, as well as his thought, imposes a heavy burden upon the reader. Yet scattered throughout his writing are epigrammatic statements of unusual power, and metaphors which, as "living flowers of imagination," brighten the difficult path which a student of Hegel must tread. That the path yields ample rewards for him who has the strength and the resolution to persist thereon is today more widely acknowledged, perhaps, than at any time since Hegel's death a hundred years ago.